

PROJECT: Kankakee River Basin Feasibility Study, February 2001

AUTHORIZATION: House Resolution (Docket 2468) dated 14 Sep 1995

TYPE: General Investigation - Flood Control

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Kankakee River basin extends for 200 miles and covers more than 5,200 square miles in Illinois and Indiana. Recurrent flooding of the area has caused damages to agriculture and infrastructure. The USACE study will investigate the flooding problem and recommend flood protection, sediment control and ecosystem restorations using traditional methods such as levees and sand removal and ecosystem enhancement, restoration and preservation features such as opening old river meanders, wetland creation, and erosion barriers. The project sponsors are the Indiana and Illinois Departments of Natural Resources and the Kankakee River Basin Commission. The Feasibility Study is cost shared equally between the Federal government and the sponsors.

CURRENT STATUS: The Recon Report was completed in March 1998. Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreements have been signed in 1999 with the three project sponsors (see below). Near term milestone is to identify all potential project solutions by early October 2000, after which detailed evaluation and assessment of these solutions will begin.

Initiative under evaluation in Illinois: tributary bank stabilization and advanced obstruction removal; vegetation strips along ditches and streams; sediment control features in main channel and on Singleton Ditch, creation of wetlands on or near tributaries and streams. Initiatives in Indiana on the main channel: rebuilding the existing levee from State Line to US41, sediment traps on Singleton Ditch; restoration of river meanders and levee control at Horseshoe Bend, reinforcement or new levees parallel to and adjacent to the existing sidecast levees, riverbank tree removal, vegetation buffers, re-meander drainage ditches & construction of marshes, set-back levees; large open flood retention areas. A possible initiative on the headwater regions of the basin is the creation of numerous wetlands on ditches and streams. While no specific acreage has been determined, the intent is to create sufficient wetlands such that the main channel river stages and durations of high water flood events are reduced. A reduced river stage and duration may result in greater level of protection afforded by the existing levees, a reduced amount of water going into Illinois, and removal of sediments. Headwater wetland initiatives may involve multiple federal, state and local government partnerships.

The USACE and the USFWS have been working closely to integrate each respective agency's plan to reduce conflicts, redundant solutions, and minimize cost of projects. In support of interagency relationships, an Executive Steering Committee meeting was held on 22 February 2001. The next scheduled ESC is for 17 April 2001.

PLANNED WORK

FY01

- Continue work on the feasibility study.

FY 02

- Complete feasibility study in Mar/Apr 2002 and submit to LRD for Commanders Notice.

PROJECT COST:

Total Study Cost Estimate	\$3,300,000
Reconnaissance Phase (Federal)	100,000
Feasibility Phase (Federal)	1,550,000
Feasibility Phase (Non-Federal)	1,550,000



BENEFITS: To be determined in feasibility study. Project benefits will be based on both damage reduction and ecosystem restoration.

LOCAL SPONSORS: Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Kankakee River Basin Commission (Indiana – co-signatory with Indiana DNR), and Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

ISSUES/CONCERNS:

- Flood damage reduction measures must be compatible with study's goals of enhancing natural resources. Insure USFWS national wildlife refuge in the basin does not interfere with USACE's flood protection project. Continuing coordination between USACE, sponsors, USFWS, local community, and congressional interest is critical to successful completion of the study.
- Completion of the Feasibility Study revised from September 2001 to April 2002 (Commanders Notice). Completion in April 2002 would allow for federal and state funding actions to accommodate an early design PED start.
- A successful feasibility study must recommend solutions that accommodate both conservationist and agricultural desires. Flood control can be obtained by using non-traditional and traditional methods.
- Solutions to flood damage reduction must not result in increased flow into Illinois. Water retention solutions (via setback levees and upland wetland initiatives) are expected to either maintain or reduce current flow volumes, stages and durations.

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